Reaſons tendred by the Free Butchers of London,

againſt the Bill in Parliament, to reſtraine Butchers from Grazing of Cattle.

LONDON

FIrſt, the cauſe of this Bill put in againſt Butchers for grazing and ſelling of Oxen and Sheep aliue, is, becauſe that thoſe men that frame their Bill againſt vs, know that Butchers of London can affoord a better penyworth then they can: The reaſon thereof is, that there is no Butcher of London but doth ſerue ſeuen yeares Apprentice (at the leaſt) before he is made Free, and in that time hee may learne to know what a leane Oxe is worth, and what hee may bee worth when he is fat: But on the other ſide, theſe men (for the moſt part) were neuer Apprentice at all, to know how to buy and ſell: and therefore, although we pay as much for ground as they do, yet we will affoord a better peniworth then they either will or can: and in that we hope we are profitable to the Commonwealth.

2. We ſay, that we are to prouide and keepe in ſtore for the Cittie: For, as it is the care of the Lord Maior & other the Magiſtrates of the City of London, in the time of plenty to buy Corne in the Markets, and to lay it vp in ſtore, for to ſupply the Markets when the Country doth faile: So, it is our care (being free Butchers of London) to buy Oxen and Sheepe when they are plentifull, and to keepe them in our grounds neere London, for the prouiſion of the Cittie, till the Countrey cannot affoord ſuch Cattle ſufficient to ſerue ſuch an honourable Citty as London is, becauſe their drift is long, and the wayes very foule, which is the cauſe that though they are fat when they come out of the Country, yet they are leane before they come to London: When on the contrary, our Cattle are in our grounds neere London, and may be brought home in halfe a day, ſo that in driuing they are neuer the worſe. This we will proue, and therfore they cannot affoord ſo good as we can.

3. It will be proued that in any Market of London, if Butchers do bring Cattle to ſell, they do ſell them ſooner, and as good cheape as any man whatſoeuer that renteth his ground.

4. We craue to haue the liberty that all the Kings ſubiects haue, viz. All men of what degree, eſtate or calling whatſoeuer, be they rich or poore, from the higheſt to the loweſt, they may graze Cattle if they will, and ſell them aliue: Or any Tradeſman in London, or in the Countrey, if he be able to hyre Land, or if he haue land of his owne, it is lawfull for him to graze, and afterwards to ſell the Cattle he hath grazed aliue: therefore we truſt, that which is allowed euery one of his Maieſties ſubiects, is not prohibited for vs to doe: ſo that we hope we may haue liberty to feed Oxen and Sheepe, and all other Cattle, and ſell them aliue if we neede (keeping them ſo long as the Statute alloweth all men) otherwiſe, we ſhould ſeeme Aliens and ſtrangers (being barred of that liberty which is limited to euery one) and not his Maieſties ſubiects.

5. We craue (not on the behalfe of all Butchers whatſoeuer, for there are many that haue not ſerued half their time, and ſome that were neuer Apprentice, that vſe the trade of a Butcher, theſe wee omit: but on the behalfe of the Free Butchers of London, that are a Company of London, and beare the charge of a Company of London) that the benefit of grazing may not be taken from vs, which anciently we haue vſed, and without which, our trade is (as it were) no trade at all, and not worthy ſeuen yeares ſeruice.

6. Thoſe that haue put in their Bill againſt Butchers, haue not done it for the good of the Commonwealth, but for their owne priuate gaine. For, if they can enact an Act of Parliament againſt Butchers for ſelling of Sheepe & Oxen aliue, then the London Butchers muſt many Market dayes in a yeare, giue them that proſecute to haue ſuch an Acte, twenty ſhillings in one Oxe, and eighteene pence or two ſhillings in one Sheepe, more in one Market day, then they were worth the Market day before. The cheefeſt cauſe that they would haue this Acte, is, that thereby they might haue their willes to inhaunce their prizes at their owne wils and pleaſures (not caring for the hinderance of others:) For when the Market is ſcanty of Cattle, then wee haue them in our grounds to ſerue our turne, and to furniſh the Markets for others of the poore Inhabitants of ſo great a Citie: for then (vnleſſe we our ſelues would be looſers) we muſt be forced to ſell Beefe at three pence or foure dearer in a ſtone, & euery ioynt of Mutton three pence or foure pence deerer in one market day then at other times: but hauing in ſuch times of ſcarſitie Cattle grazing in our own grounds ſufficient to ſerue the Market, we thereby hold downe their exceſſiue prizes, which is the onely cauſe they haue preferred this Bill againſt vs free Butchers of London, for ſelling of Cattle aliue.

7 When as there happen any deepe ſnowes, foule weather, or high waters, that the Graſiers cannot bring their Cattle to the City: as alſo in the time of the viſitation of the plague, the Butchers of London out of their owne proui-ſion and ſtore, haue vſed and do continually furniſh the City of London, which otherwiſe would not be ſupplyed.

8. The Kings Maieſties Court at the entertainment of Ambaſſadors, and other times, is often furniſhed with prouiſion out of the Butchers ſtore, which they ſhall neuer be able to doe, if they ſhall bee reſtrained grazing, and ſo conſequently, his Maieſty oftentimes vnprouided.

9. Laſtly, when it ſhall be conſidered by this high Court of Parliament, how much it may concerne the benefit of the Commonwealth, that we the free Butchers of London ſhould continue the vſe of grazing: and on the contrarie what ſcarſity it will many times in a yeare bring in the City, if ſuch an Act ſhould be inacted againſt vs, we doubt not but it will be thought that thoſe men who haue framed this Bill againſt vs, haue done it more for their owne priuate gaine, then for the good of the Commonwealth.